



Logan Square Neighborhood Association

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Testimony

Human Services Commission FY2011 Budget Cuts

\$61,000 restoration needed for LSNA Parent Mentor Program.

Good afternoon. My name is Sonia Cortez, and I am the parent mentor coordinator at Avondale-Logandale School in Chicago. On behalf of the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, I am asking you to restore \$61,000 to the Parent Mentor Program.

Through the Parent Mentor Program, parents are invited into the schools. Parent mentors team up with a teacher, and then help students one-on-one or in small groups for two hours a day, every day. When the school bell rings every morning, 120 parent mentors in Logan Square walk into their assigned classroom to give teachers and students a helping hand. Parents are deeply involved with almost everything that happens at the school. The foundation of all of this is the IDHS funding for small stipends.

The IDHS budget cuts to our TANF-Special Project will cut 90 parents out of the classroom. That is 90 teachers without a parent mentor and 2,250 students without the help of an extra loving adult in their classroom.

The Parent Mentor program is the ideal job training program. What better way for moms and dads to get into jobs and further their education than working in their children's school. It is something that we love and something that is making our schools better every day. We are helping ourselves at the same time that we are helping the next generation.

I started out as a parent mentor three years ago, and graduated to become the parent mentor coordinator. Before Avondale had the Parent Mentor Program, I volunteered regularly at the school. For four years, I helped out in the office for hours a day, but I was never invited into the classroom to help kids or to learn how to help my own child at home. All those years as a volunteer, I was still on the outside looking in. Because of the Parent Mentor Program, now the parents know the school inside out.

Please support the Parent Mentor Collaborative at only \$61,000.